

September 22, 2008 - Chairwoman Slaughter Applauds House Passage of Great Lakes Compact

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, September 22, 2008

Chairwoman Slaughter Applauds House Passage of Great Lakes Compact

Legislation Now Headed To President's Desk For Signature

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chair of the House Committee on Rules and Co-Chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, today celebrated House passage of critical legislation to approve the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, a multi-state agreement to manage and protect the water resources of the Great Lakes Basin. The legislation was passed by the Senate last month and now will be sent to the President's desk to be signed into law.

"The Great Lakes are a treasure for our nation and a tremendous environmental and economic asset for New York," said Chairwoman Slaughter. "Today's passage of the Great Lakes Compact will go a long way towards ensuring that the lakes are properly managed and preserved so that we will continue to benefit from them for generations to come."

Eight states that border the Great Lakes- New York, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin - are party to the Compact. The legislature of each state has already ratified the Compact; however, before the agreement can become federal law, it must be approved by Congress. This month, Chairwoman Slaughter sent a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi requesting that legislation to approve the Great Lakes Compact be brought to the House floor with haste.

"The Great Lakes are relied upon by families, farms, and businesses in states from New York to Minnesota," Slaughter continued. "We simply must protect the lakes and I strongly believe that the Great Lakes Compact is the most powerful tool we have to do so."

BACKGROUND

The Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact bans new and increased diversions of water outside the Great Lakes Basin with only limited, highly regulated exceptions.

The Compact calls on the signatory states to develop and implement water conservation programs that, collectively, will ensure improvement of the waters and water dependent natural resources; will protect the integrity of the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem; and, specifically, will retain and restore the quantity of surface water and groundwater in the Basin.

In addition, the Compact requires the Great Lakes states, in cooperation with the Canadian provinces, to conduct a periodic assessment every five years of the cumulative impacts of withdrawals, diversions, and consumptive uses of Great Lakes waters.

Earlier this month, Chairwoman Slaughter sent a letter to Speaker Pelosi to urge House consideration of the Compact. The full text of Chairwoman Slaughter's letter to Speaker Pelosi is below:

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I urge you to bring to the House floor for consideration legislation to ratify the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Resources Compact. As a co-chair of the Great Lakes Congressional Task Force, I believe there is no legislation that could do more to protect the Great Lakes.

The eight Great Lakes States all recently ratified the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, which bans new and increased diversions of water outside the Great Lakes Basin with only limited, highly regulated exceptions. The Compact calls on the signatory states to develop and implement water conservation programs that, collectively, will ensure improvement of the waters and water dependent natural resources; will protect the integrity of the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem; and, specifically, will retain and restore the quantity of surface water and groundwater in the Basin.

For the Compact to have full force in law, Congress must pass, and the President must sign, legislation approving the agreement. The Senate has already passed S.J.Res. 45, and the House Judiciary Committee reported out H.R. 6577, both pieces of legislation which ratify the Compact.

Accordingly, I urge you to bring S.J.Res. 45 or H.R. 6577 to the House floor for a vote during the month of September. This legislation will go a long way to protect and preserve our Great Lakes for future generations. The Great Lakes are a national treasure, and I simply cannot think of a more important resource that touches the lives of millions of Americans every day.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter

Member of Congress

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